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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING THEME OF NATIONAL
ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH**

MONTGOMERY – “Preventing Underage Drinking,” is the theme of this year’s Alcohol Awareness Month, held annually during the month of April. Alcohol Awareness Month has been sponsored since 1987 by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD). Its purpose is to encourage local communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues, and educating the American public about the disease of alcoholism – that it is a treatable disease, not a moral weakness, and that alcoholics can and do recover. A primary focus of Alcohol Awareness Month over the past ten years has been underage drinking and the devastating effects it can have on youth.

During the month of April, the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation’s Division of Substance Abuse Services is sponsoring a public awareness campaign targeting underage drinking. The statewide media campaign is funded by a federal grant, and a main component of the campaign centers around the Web site www.parentalyzer.org. The site features a quiz for parents, tips, statistics and advice aimed at changing the mind set that underage drinking is a “rite of passage” for teens. Parents are asked the question, “Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?”

With more than 40% of Alabama high school students saying that they have had at least one alcoholic drink in the past month, and 24% admitting binge drinking in the last month, it is important to remind parents that they are the number one source of information for their children, even though they may feel as if their children aren’t listening.

RESOURCES

Information about Alcohol Awareness Month can be found by visiting NACDD’s Web site at <http://www.ncadd.org/programs/awareness/>.

Information on substance abuse services in the state of Alabama can be obtained by contacting the DMH/MR Substance Abuse Service Division at (334)242-3961 or visit us online at www.mh.alabama.gov.